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GEOGRAPHY IN COMMUNIST CHINA

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## FOREWORD

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GEOGRAPHY IN COMMUNIST CHINA

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEOGRAPHY IN CHINA

[Following is a translation of an article by Bohdan Kikolski in *Przegląd geograficzny* (Review of Geography), Vol XXXI, No 1, 1959, pages 152-157.]

In 1949, after the victory of the socialist revolution, the Chinese People's Republic was established. During the revolutionary period the development of geography was somewhat restricted. Some well-known geographers left China and emigrated to the United States or the island of Taiwan. But most scientific workers stayed at their places of work and joined the work of rebuilding the country. The first stage in the development of science in the Chinese People's Republic was the period of decisive struggle against reactionary scientific theories. This was particularly true of economic geography, in which this task was assigned to the Chinese People's University. This center had the job of training workers for the state apparatus, permitting them to learn science in ideological and economic subjects. The Chair of Economic Geography of the Department of State Planning in this university, following Soviet examples, worked out new programs for studying geography in the schools and universities. The chair, under the direction of Professor Sun Chin-chih, also undertook the great work of replacing the old cadre of economic geographers with new people trained after the revolution. Thus some older economic geographers changed their specialties, directing their interests toward physical geography. At present professors like Hu Huan-yun, Jan Mei-ou, and many others are giving lectures in physical geography, while most of the lecturers on economic geography in People's China are graduates of the People's University.

Work has also started on translations from Soviet geography books. The following have been translated into Chinese: Vitver's Economic Geography of the World, Baranskiy's Economic Geography of the USSR, Kalesnik's General Physical Geography, and a number of articles and papers on methodology.

A number of Soviet geographers have visited China. In addition to making use of Soviet contributions, the People's University has begun its own publications. A handbook of economic geography of China has been prepared for the intermediate schools, lectures on the economic geography of China for the higher economics schools, etc. At present there are geography departments in the universities at Peking, Nanking, Canton, Lanchow, and Sian. There is also a chair of geography at the People's University in Peking, which does not train students. Outside the universities geography departments exist in the higher pedagogical schools in Peking, Shanghai, and Changchun, and in the higher pedagogical institutes in Shihkiachwang, Lanchow, Sian, Kaifeng, Tsinan, Nanking, Canton, Fuchow, Hanchow [sic Hangchow], Chungking, Kweiyang, and Yengpton [unidentified].

Furthermore, in a number of higher pedagogical institutes there are geography installations training geography lecturers. Such installations are found at the institutes in Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, Taiyuan, Urumchi, Wuhu, Chüchê Choto [unidentified], Talien [Dairen?], Changchun, Wuhan, and Nanchang. At present there are geographics centers in 23 cities, training around 6,700 students, with around 600 lecturers working. (Chinese intermediate schools are in two levels: Teachers for the higher-level schools are trained by the higher pedagogical schools, while those for the lower-level schools study at the higher pedagogical institutes.) There has been a marked increase in the number of assistants in the geography departments; they are seven times as numerous as the professors. University geography departments have been set up to train future scientific workers, and also supply geographers to individual ministries. Individual centers have specialized in certain directions. Thus Peking University specializes in physical geography, geomorphology, and economic geography, and is planning to organize specialization in cartography and climatology. Nanking University specializes in physical and economic geography, cartography, and geomorphology, and Sun Yat-Sen University in Canton specializes in physical and economic geography and is planning also to specialize in biogeography. The universities in Sian and Lanchow train exclusively physical geographers. In addition to the above-mentioned schools, two cartography training installations are operating in China: the Military Cartographic School in Peking and the Cartographic School in Wuhan. Throughout China a unified program of university studies is obligatory, as are the assignments for graduating students. Hitherto, however, no system for obtaining scientific degrees has been established.

There has been a considerable development of research work as well. This work is in part associated with the great program for industrialization and activation of the nation's economy. For this purpose the Institute of Geography has been organized; its manpower now numbers 10 times the prewar figure. Geographers have participated in work to prepare plans for regulating the following rivers: Hwang-Ho, Hwai-Ho, Hunshui [unidentified], Yunting-Ho, Sinan-Kiang [unidentified], Tsin Shui, and others; in laying out the course of new rail lines; and in the Tibetan expedition of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and in expeditions to Sinkiang and Tsaidam. At present geographers are continuing work on the middle course of the Hwang-Ho where soil erosion threatens the development of agriculture, and are participating in research on the watersheds of the rivers Amur, Sungari, and Ussuri. In 1953 a section of the Institute of Geography in Peking, directed by Professor Sun Chin-chih, began work on a monograph on the economic-geographic regions of China. These works, called "Tili chih," are a sort of continuation of the work of the Old Chinese scholars, who compiled a regional chronicle. This work is advancing rapidly. The first two fascicles have already been published, containing economic-geographic monographs on Inner Mongolia and Northern China. This work

involved almost all departments of geography. The Institute has also published a number of other articles such as "The Physical Geography of North-Eastern China," "The Economic Geography of the Watersheds of the Amur and Ussuri in the Province of Heilungkiang," and "Research on Agricultural Planning in the Province of Kansu." Reports of completed scientific work, articles based on the results of field work, and communications are published in the geographical quarterly entitled "Tilitzuliao" [Geographical Material], edited by the Collegium of the Institute under the direction of Professor Huan Pin-wei. Also the Chinese Geographical Society has been established, now numbering more than 2,000 members. At present it is directed by Professor Sun Chin-chih. It unites most geographers, and performs popularization and review work. Together with the Institute of Geography, it sponsors many scientific investigations. Through the activities of these two institutions publication activity has developed very well.

The prerevolutionary organ of the society "Tili siepao" (Acta Geographica Sinica) has been published since 1950 with the collaboration of the Institute of Geography. This is now the most important Chinese geographic periodical, and is edited by Hou Jen-chih. In principle, it publishes only the work of Chinese geographers concerning China, mainly in the field of physical geography. Sometimes it contains translations of general methodological articles. If the quarterly "Tili hsueh Pao" is intended primarily for a narrow range of readers, the monthly "Tili dzyszy," [Geographical Science], which has appeared since 1950, with a circulation of 50,000, is intended as an aid to raising the level of understanding of geography teachers and amateurs. This publication contains mainly economic geography; it carries articles on the economic geography of China and the world, and methods of teaching geography. The Society also publishes the quarterly "Tili yik pao" [Survey of Geography Translations], and an internal bulletin informing Society members throughout China of the life and work of the Society.

Thus there are in China today five different, supplementary scientific geographical journals. The monthly "Li hsing chia" [Traveler] contains articles intended for the broad mass of readers.

Many geographers print their work in provincial publications in the form of information brochures and characterizations of numerous cities and regions of China. In discussing geographical publications we should not overlook cartographic publications which, although they are basically done outside the geographical institutions, play an important role in geographical education. After the revolution, a number of wall maps were published in China for intermediate and elementary schools. Many maps were published characterizing individual elements of the geographical environment (hypsometry, the river net, temperature, precipitation, soils, etc.), complete hypsometric maps of the physical-geographic regions of China, economic-geographic maps (e.g., maps of deposits, a communications map), a nationality map, and

many others. In addition a number of atlases have appeared. In 1953 an "Atlas of Provinces," a "Small Atlas of China," and a "Small Atlas of the World" were published for the elementary and intermediate schools, and recently a fine new physical-geographic atlas has been published for teachers, geography students, and workers in the state administration.

Chinese geographers have joined in the work of rebuilding the country. They are working on the further development of Chinese geography. Their great vigor permits looking to the future with confidence. This enormous and still imperfectly known country is an extraordinarily interesting object of investigation. The enormous support given by the state to geographical research, and the large number of young people studying, permit the belief that under the present regime Chinese geography will develop more rapidly and generally than was the case in the past.

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## THE TRAVELS OF POLISH GEOGRAPHERS IN CHINA

[Following is a translation of an article by Stanislaw Leszczycki in *Przegląd geograficzny* (Review of Geography), Vol XXXI, No 1, 1951, pages 219-224.]

Under the program of exchange between the Chinese and Polish Academies of Sciences, Professor M. Klimaszewski and I went to China for 7 weeks. The purpose of the journey was to become acquainted with Chinese geography, its organization and work, to establish official contact between Polish and Chinese geographers, and to become acquainted with as many as possible of the geographical problems characteristic of the country and social-economic life of the Chinese people. In China we were guests of the Institute of Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and were given a warm welcome throughout the journey.

After 2 weeks in Peking we made a 5-week trip through eastern China. We covered more than 11,000 kilometers, of which 5,390 kilometers were traveled by train, 2,370 by airplane, 1,380 by ship, and more than 2,000 kilometers by automobile. This permitted us to observe various landscapes and to encounter the problems of the following geographical regions: the vicinity of Peking; the Great Chinese Lowland; the loess uplands; the valleys of the Hwang Ho and Wei rivers; the Tsinling Mountains; the Szechwan Basin; the central course of the Yangtze; the lowlands on the lower course of the Yangtze; the "drowned" mountains in the Yangtze delta; southern China (subtropical); the delta of the Canton River; the tropical area of Kweilin, etc. Our itinerary took us through Peking, Chengchow, San-men Hsia, Sian, Chengtu, Chungking, Wuhan, Nanking, Wuhsi [unidentified], Soochow, Shanghai, Hangchow, Canton, Kweilin, Changsha, Peking. During the trip we observed such large Chinese cities as Shanghai, Peking, Chungking, Canton, Wuhan, Nanking (all over 1,000,000 inhabitants) and smaller cities such as Sian, Chengtu, Hangchow, Changsha, Wuhsi, and Soochow (all over 500,000 inhabitants).

In addition to the basic itinerary and the cities mentioned, and their environs, we made 13 long automobile journeys (each over 100 kilometers long) in the environs of Peking (to the Chinese Wall and the Ming tombs and dams, to the Western Mountains, and to the Kuanting [unidentified] dam), San-men Hsia to the gorge of the Hwang Ho, Sian (to the threshold to the Loess Uplands and to the foothills of the Tsinling Mountains), Chengtu (to Kwanhsien, irrigation headquarters for the Min River), Chungking (to Pehpei and the Kialing River), the Yangtze from Chungking to Wuhan through the San-hsia, Wuhan and the neighborhood of the three cities, Nanking (to Chi-Sha [unidentified]), Shanghai (north-west from the city), Canton (to the delta of the Canton River and to the mountains north of the city), and Kweilin (to Yachow [unidentified]).

The journey enabled us to become acquainted with smaller cities, settlements, villages, and people's communes and their organization; with the system of agriculture; methods of transport, building, and artisan, artistic, people's, and factory industry; numerous methods of firing pig iron, steel, charcoal, and bricks; stone quarries and mines for various mineral raw materials; etc. We met problems of geomorphology, soils, and plant groups. We observed methods of combatting erosion and dust infiltration from the deserts; we followed work on the regulation of rivers and streams, on the construction of networks of canals and irrigation installations, the construction of dams, etc. But the main subject of observation was the changes which man has made in the geographical environment, which were frequently on a scale not encountered in other parts of the world. We collected prolific materials, took around 2,000 photographs, and brought home thick volumes of notes. The material collected will require special processing.

During the journey we visited 15 scientific centers interested in geographic problems. These were the Institute of Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Peking, with branches in Nanking and Canton (the latter is being organized); the Research Institute of Geodesy and Cartography in Wuchang; the Cartographic Publishing Installations in Peking; and the Planning Offices of the Commission for Regulation of the Yangtze in Hankow. We visited geography departments in the universities in Peking, Sian, Nanking, and Canton; the chair of economic geography in the People's University in Peking; geography departments in the pedagogic universities in Peking and Shanghai; and geography departments in the pedagogic institutions in Peipei near Chungking, Hangchow, and Canton. We visited a total of 10 geography departments at higher educational institutions, permitting knowledge of the system of training geographers and an understanding of the basis of the new stage of reforms in the cultural revolution which has been going on since the middle of 1957. During these visits we established closer contact with several dozen Chinese geographers.

During our stay in China we gave lectures on Polish geography and its work and methods at the Institute of Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Peking and Nanking, and at the universities in Peking, Sian, Canton, and Shanghai, and at the Pedagogic Institute in Hangchow.

Up to the middle of 1958 the system of training geographers at the universities was generally based on the Soviet system, and took into account Chinese traditions as well as current requirements of the national economy. Since the middle of 1958 the training system has been changed; in addition to normal teaching greater emphasis has been placed on the research work of the students, ideological training, physical work, and military training. The development of new programs, adapted to the requirements of the new stage in the cultural revolution, has been undertaken. Particular stress has been given the connection of science with life and politics, the practical purposes of investigations, the

connection between intellectual and physical work. For instance, this includes investigations of erosion in a certain area, the development of a project to protect the given area from erosion, and the realization of the project through the students' own physical work.

These geography departments consist of three to five chairs. They always contain chairs of physical geography and economic geography, while other fields are represented by various combinations of chairs. Out of 10 departments four have chairs of geomorphology, three in the methods of geography, two of the physical geography of the world (regional), and there is one of each of the following: physical geography of China, climatology and hydrography, soil geography, and biogeography. Specializations are often associated with the chairs. The chairs can divide into branch work installations; thus specializations are narrow and correspond to the area of interest of the work installations: e.g., physical geography of continents, economic geography of China, economic geography of the world, etc. The students are not obliged to study a secondary subject. University students and those of pedagogical institutions teach for several months (up to one-half year) in nearby elementary, intermediate, evening, etc. schools. All students are housed together at the training installations (located far from the cities), and study at state expense, but they do not receive financial scholarships. After completing their studies, they are directed to work by the work-assignment commissions.

Except for the ancient geography centers in Nanking, Peking, and Canton, most of the geography departments were not set up until after the liberation, i.e., after 1949, particularly in 1951-1956. Nevertheless they have good and modern equipment, and each has over a dozen halls, work rooms, and offices. Some departments have their own lecture halls, but most of them share halls with other departments in the installation. Offices for professors and assistants always hold more than one person. Individual chairs have their own work sites, where their scientific work is concentrated. These work sites contain photographs connected with work, samples of rock or soil, manuscripts, press excerpts (for economic geography), etc. The departments have good libraries, with anywhere from a few thousand to over 20,000 volumes. They are primarily Chinese books, but there are plenty of foreign-language books, many journals, and even complete sets of well-known Soviet, English, French, and German journals. The most frequently encountered are Soviet books. The library of the Institute of Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has around 100,000 volumes, of which more than 4,000 are old provincial treatises reaching back to the Sung dynasty (960-1279).

The libraries have reading rooms for general use or only for scientific workers; sometimes common reading rooms are set up for several departments. The reading rooms have current journals. The average number of these is 100 to 200, and sometimes exceeds 300. Of this number one-third to one-half are foreign. The majority of these

are Soviet, but almost all the important journals from the capitalist countries are to be found. There is no lack of Polish journals, of which several copies are usually available. The reading rooms also collect the Chinese press, with the number of daily papers reaching 30. Clippings are kept of old newspapers and are available in card files. Almost all departments have large collections of wall maps. These maps are Chinese, Soviet, German, etc. They include numerous manuscript maps. There are also collections of hand maps and topographic and geological maps. The atlases, of which there are several dozen, and sometimes more than 100, almost always include new foreign atlases in addition to Chinese and Soviet ones. There are large cartographic collections at the Institute of Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Nanking and at the Cartographic Publishing Installations in Peking. These installations also have complete collections of topographic maps, large numbers of foreign maps and atlases, and sections of old maps.

Photography collections are relatively rare, and there are almost no collections of transparencies or slides, or equipment for darkening rooms. There are very few photographic laboratories: in Canton there is an independent laboratory which serves the needs of the Department. There is no thought of geographic films. The teaching installations have their own mimeographing rooms, and publish lecture materials and teaching aids (maps) in their own fields. The geography departments are well-equipped with geodetic and topographic instruments. During study considerable emphasis is placed on practical field work, surveying settlements and the cities of people's communes, rivers, streams, canals, etc.

In each department there are geological-petrographic cabinets. These are usually divided into several sections: geology and paleontology (mainly for teaching purposes), petrography (nearby rock, ores, useful deposits), and mineralogy with models of minerals, etc. In each department there is also a soil-chemistry laboratory making analyses in its own area of interest, and collections of soil profiles (typical of China or of a given region). Each department also has a cartographic laboratory, of an auxiliary nature. Here wall maps are made for lectures, topographic maps are copies for ozalid prints, charts are made for teaching purposes, and maps are produced for the work of the chairs. These latter include geomorphological maps, maps of physical-geographic units, of erosion forms, of land use, and numerous other maps for illustrating monographs.

Some departments also have hydrochemical labs for analyzing water and suspended materials, and geoplastic laboratories in which models are made. Almost everywhere there are collections of plastic models of typical landscapes from various parts of China and from the immediate environs of the particular school. There are also illuminated models, such as those showing the course of underground water. Sometimes the departments have meteorological stations which the chair helps, and in Shanghai there is even an astronomical station. The Geography Department of Peking University has a field station in Tsai Gau [unidentified] in the mountains to the northwest of Peking.

The Chinese observe the principle that science must be connected with life and politics, it must serve society. Therefore the first plan proposed subjects connected with practical life. This included training and field work of students done on neighboring People's Communes (village plans, field plans, land-use maps, etc.). Geomorphological investigations are connected with the battle against erosion; work is done on areas intended for irrigation and rivers which are to be regulated, and orchards and forests are planned for deforested slopes, while useful rocks and ores are prospected and material collected for the water economy.

The main geographical investigations are directed by the Institute of Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences; the geographical teaching centers collaborate.

They are interested in the following problems and work:

1. The division of China into physico-geographical regions.
2. The division of China into geomorphological regions.
3. The Great Atlas of China, composed of four volumes, each of which is to contain around 100 maps.
4. The division of China into agricultural regions.
5. Work connected with regulating the large rivers, such as the Yangtze, the Hwang Ho, the Hang Kiang [sic Han Kiang?], the Amur, etc.
6. The struggle against erosion, mainly in the Loess Upland.
7. The struggle against dust from the deserts (the problem of afforesting the hillsides; in 1959 around 3,000 geographers are to participate in investigations in the Ordos Desert).
8. Studies of the development of the railroad net.
9. The preparation of complex geographic and physico-geographic or economico-geographic monographs on individual provinces. A number of such monographs are already in print.
10. The Great Geography of China, in two volumes.
11. Investigations of the high mountains, particularly of the glaciers, and of their influence on changes in the water level of rivers, etc.

Numerous research expeditions are organized by the Institute each year, and it participates in expeditions organized by other scientific institutions or state offices. The Institute of Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences organized 38 investigating expeditions between 1950 and 1956. At present the main interest is directed to Tibet, Tsaidam, and Sinkiang.

The geographical publishing houses are quite numerous in China. In addition to a very large number of pamphlets and popular-scientific brochures, a monograph series is published on special subjects. There are also periodicals: "Acta Geographica Sinica" and "Memoirs of Geography," both quarterlies; "Geographic Science," a popular scientific monthly with a circulation of around 50,000, a series of monographs on the provinces, and reports from expeditions and field investigations. There is a special publishing house for Southeast Asia. A periodical

"Geography in the School" is to be published, and the popularly monthly "Lu hsing chia" ("Traveler") already comes out regularly. Translations from foreign languages, principally Russian, are also published. There are numerous publications of wall maps, hand maps, touring maps, city plans, and atlases. The Catalogue of the Cartographic Publishing Installations in Peking for April 1958 contains 252 items.

Chinese geography has undergone a rapid development in recent years. The number of geographic places of work engaged in research and teaching is increasing and the cadre of young workers is growing. The problems assigned by the national economy to geography require tremendous efforts. This in turn will promote the further rapid development of Chinese geography. Work of practical importance has priority in the plan. It would appear that theoretical work receives less stress. The geographical centers have very good and modern equipment and are supplied with world literature, although foreign languages are little used. For example, the publications generally lack reviews of foreign-language material, and where such reviews appear they are very brief. The cadre of Chinese geographers is young, numerically large, and growing. There is never a lack of material resources for scientific work. Chinese geographers have made their closest contacts with Soviet geographers, but there is no lack of Chinese geographers who have completed their studies in the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany, etc. No geographer knows Polish, however. At present (1958) the schools are undergoing great reforms resulting from the cultural revolution. The outcome will be seen in the coming years. Changes in the social-economic life of the Chinese People's Republic are coming very rapidly.

It seems to me possible to establish closer contact with Chinese geographers. In addition to us, several geographers have been sent from Poland to China since the war, and two of them are still there working on their aspirant studies and have mastered Chinese. It is possible to establish and expand personal exchange, particularly without spending foreign exchange. On the Polish side priority should be given those who are interested in studying some concrete problem in China. It should also be possible to expand material exchange: the books and maps in our libraries and places of work are still unsatisfactory. There should be more intensive popularization of the achievements of geography in the other country through publication of reports and reviews and even original work done in the other country. Translations of geographical work of the other country should be placed in the publications of foreign-language translations. A work post devoted to the geography of China is to be established at Warsaw University. It is possible for Polish geographers to participate in Chinese investigations and expeditions. This is true only of young geographers who are well-prepared for scientific field work and will stand up well under the difficulties of field research. Exchange of lecturers should be possible. It would be useful if geographers from the other country could participate in the more important domestic and international conferences organized by one of the countries. Finally,

collaboration between Chinese and Polish geographers in the international forum is possible. In any case constant exchange of experience in research and teaching methods should be very useful. The problem of collaborating with the Chinese geographers is a pressing one, and very important, and should therefore receive a careful and over-all solution.

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